



17 MAR 2020

Dear [REDACTED]

On 1 February 2020, you emailed the Department of Internal Affairs (DIA) requesting, under the Official Information Act 1982, the following information:

1. *How many people in Ngaruawahia are receiving the sickness benefit?*
2. *How many people in Ngaruawahia are receiving a disability allowance?*
3. *How many people in Ngaruawahia receive the child disability allowance?*
4. *Is it possible to know the catchment area for the Ngaruawahia work and income office?*
5. *Is it possible to know how many medical certificates Ngaruawahia medical centre generates and how many disability allowances it generates?*
  - a. *If so, would it then be possible somehow for Ngaruawahia medical centre to request a list of patients enrolled there that have sickness benefits, but no disability allowance form completed?*

On 4 February 2020 your request was transferred to the Ministry of Social Development (the Ministry).

As part of the 2013 Welfare Reform, Jobseeker Support Health Condition, Injury, or Disability (JS HCD) replaced the Sickness Benefit.

As at the end of December 2019, 250 working age clients assigned to the Ngaruawahia service centre were in receipt of Jobseeker Support HCD. This figure includes only those aged between 18 and 64 years old.

As at the end of December 2019, 323 people assigned to the Ngaruawahia service centre were in receipt of a Disability Allowance (DA). Some people may receive a Disability Allowance for themselves, and for a partner or dependant child. Where this is the case, they will be included more than once in this figure.

Child Disability Allowances are paid directly to the child's principal caregiver. As at the end of December 2019, Child Disability Allowances were paid to the principal caregiver of 131 children of the Ngaruawahia service centre. This figure shows the service centre that the principal caregiver receiving the payment is assigned to.

The Ministry has interpreted 'catchment area' in question four of your request to mean the area from which clients for the Ngaruawahia Service Centre are most likely to reside.

Please note that catchment areas for Ministry Service Centres differ from that of Territorial Local Authority (TLA). The Ngaruawahia Service Centre is located in the Ruapehu TLA, but in the Waikato Work and Income region.

The following link shows a map of the Work in Income Service Centre Regions and which service centres are within each region: [www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre/index.html](http://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/contact-us/find-a-service-centre/index.html).

The following Service Centres are the three closest to the Ngaruawahia Service Centre:

- Huntly Service Centre, 37 William Street, Huntly
- Five Cross Roads Service Centre, 3 Fifth Avenue, Hamilton
- Hamilton Central, 468 Anglesea Street, Hamilton

Work capacity medical certificates may be required by the Ministry to ensure eligibility criteria are met for some forms of assistance, such as JS HCD and Disability Allowance. Some Medical Centres may have work capacity medical certificates available, or a client may be given one at an appointment with Work and Income, or simply collect one from a Work and Income Service Centre.

The Ministry is unable to provide you with how many medical certificates are generated from the Ngaruawahia Medical Centre as this information is held on individual case notes and staff would have to manually review hundreds of files. As such your request for this information is withheld under section 18(f) of the Official Information Act. The greater public service is in the effective and efficient administration of the public service.

I have considered whether the Ministry would be able to respond to your request given extra time, or the ability to charge for the information requested. I have concluded that, in either case, the Ministry's ability to undertake this work would still be prejudiced.

[REDACTED] is the Ministry's Regional Health Advisor for this area and can discuss your final question in more detail. Her contact information is as follows:

[REDACTED]

The principles and purposes of the Official Information Act 1982 under which you made your request are:

- to create greater openness and transparency about the plans, work and activities of the Government,
- to increase the ability of the public to participate in the making and administration of our laws and policies and
- to lead to greater accountability in the conduct of public affairs.

This Ministry fully supports those principles and purposes. The Ministry therefore intends to make the information contained in this letter and any attached documents available to the wider public. The Ministry will do this by publishing this letter on the Ministry of Social Development's website. Your personal details will be deleted, and the Ministry will not publish any information that would identify you as the person who requested the information.

If you wish to discuss this response with us, please feel free to contact [OIA\\_Requests@msd.govt.nz](mailto:OIA_Requests@msd.govt.nz).

If you are not satisfied with this response regarding Disability Allowances in the Ngaruawahia area, you have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Ombudsman. Information about how to make a complaint is available at [www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz) or 0800 802 602.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bridget Saunders', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bridget Saunders  
**Manager Issue Resolution, Service Delivery**